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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 8010th meeting of the Security Council, held on 24 July 2017, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Liberia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council commends the overall progress towards restoring peace, security and stability in Liberia, the commitment of the people and Government of Liberia to peace and to developing democratic processes and institutions, and the contributions of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) since its establishment in 2003, and welcomes the Liberia Peacebuilding Plan, entitled 'Sustaining Peace and Securing Development' (S/2017/282), submitted by the Secretary-General to the Council pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2333 (2016) after development through close consultation between the UN, the Government of Liberia, and partners.

"The Security Council takes note of the peacebuilding plan and actions to be undertaken during phase I of the plan from April 2017-March 2018 in support of the Government of Liberia's commitment to develop, before UNMIL's departure, durable national capacities critical to sustain peace, and, in this regard, encourages all stakeholders to enhance efforts to fulfil their commitments and provide their support for successful implementation and emphasizes the need for expanded efforts by the Liberian authorities to address the root causes of conflict, reinvigorate reconciliation processes, promote land reform, advance constitutional and institutional reforms, especially in the justice and security sectors, promote women's active participation in peacebuilding, extend state authority and social services throughout the country, and build trust between Liberian citizens and the government institutions.

"The Security Council encourages the Government of Liberia to accelerate its accountability and transparency efforts to bolster public confidence in advance of elections and transfer of power, and stresses the need for the government to honour its commitment to support the passage of the Land Rights Bill and the Local Government Bill, which will positively impact the lives and livelihoods of Liberian citizens and contribute to overcoming the societal and structural inequities that were at the root of the conflict, and emphasizes the importance of the legislature's timely action to ensure these bills are passed.

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"The Security Council notes the importance of credible presidential and legislative elections in Liberia in October 2017 and calls upon all stakeholders to ensure that the elections in October will be free, fair, credible, and transparent, including through the full participation of women, and that any dispute will be resolved peacefully through established mechanisms in accordance with the law. The Security Council welcomes the signing of the 'Farmington River Declaration' on 4 June at the ECOWAS Summit, by 20 out of the 22 political parties that were registered at the time, committing to violence-free elections in October and a peaceful transition to a new government, encourages the Government to ensure adequate resources are committed and expeditiously distributed for the National Elections Commission, and reiterates its call on international partners to support the Liberian authorities in ensuring the credibility of those elections, including through the deployment of international electoral observers. The Security Council commends international partners for their continued support in preparation for elections and encourages their continued assistance.

"The Security Council commends the successful completion of the transfer of security responsibility to Liberia's security services on 30 June 2016 and encourages the efforts underway by the Government of Liberia to put in place an elections security plan aimed at responding effectively and appropriately to any incident of public disorder and calls on the government to provide adequate resources to implement the plan.

"The Security Council expresses its continued concern that women and girls in Liberia continue to face a high incidence of sexual and gender-based violence, and reiterates its call on the Government of Liberia to address the urgent and imperative need to combat impunity and hold accountable all perpetrators responsible for such crimes, to reinforce its commitment in this regard, including through the implementation of its national action plan on sexual and gender-based violence and improving women and girls' access to justice.

"The Security Council emphasizes the need for continued international attention to, and involvement in, Liberia, and urges the Government of Liberia, UNMIL, and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) to continue to coordinate closely in the transfer of responsibilities taking into account UNMIL's drawdown and closure at the expiration of the final period of its mandate on 30 March 2018, as set out in Resolution 2333 (2016). The Security Council encourages the continued engagement of the international community and donors, including in support of the commitments made in the Liberia Peacebuilding Plan, to address capacity gaps identified in the UNCT's mapping exercise needed to assure continuity of relevant peacebuilding programs and assist Liberia's continued efforts to achieve sustainable peace. The Security Council emphasises, in this context, the importance of the convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission.

"The Security Council welcomes the support of bilateral and multilateral partners, including the UN, African Union, ECOWAS and the Mano River Union, and encourages them to continue to play a significant role in support of building and sustaining peace in Liberia."